

AIR WAR COLLEGE

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STRATEGY AND THE SPREADSHEET

Optimizing the Total Army to Satisfy Both

by

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Biography

LTC Michael Henderson is assigned to the Air War College, Air University, Maxwell AFB, AL. LTC Henderson is an Army Engineer Officer who serves as a Title 32 Active Guard Reserve (AGR) Soldier in the Arkansas National Guard. His previous assignments include a variety of staff positions and service as a Platoon Leader and Company Commander. Prior to reporting to Air War College, LTC Henderson served in a dual assignment as Operations Officer (J33) in the Directorate of Military Support for the Arkansas National Guard and 875th Engineer Battalion Commander. LTC Henderson mobilized for and deployed in Operation Noble Eagle and Operation Iraqi Freedom. LTC Henderson holds a bachelors degree in Manufacturing Technology and a Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) from Arkansas State University.

Abstract

The United States historically reduces military end strength at the conclusion of major conflicts. The Budget Control Act of 2011 imposed sequestration spending limits on the military that began the process of drawing down the military through fiscal year 2021. While the 2016 defense budget delays sequestration cuts for two years, defense cuts in some fashion are inevitable and should be planned for. This work proposes that these cuts must carefully balance strategic considerations within fiscal constraints. The paper considers three alternate approaches to achieving the sequestration cuts. The paper concludes by recommending an approach designed to allow the Total Army to maintain its' current level of combat capacity by modifying the force mix and adjusting missions in the Reserves and National Guard.



Introduction

The United States, which boasts the world's largest defense budget by a wide margin, has started repeating a historical cycle of budget driven defense cuts. The Army's large force represents an attractive target for savings through a "peace dividend." The Budget Control Act of 2011, referred to as sequestration, imposes caps on defense spending. Enacted on August 1, 2011, the Budget Control Act (BCA) sets limits on defense spending between fiscal years 2012 and 2021 that are playing a significant role in the debate about the appropriate level of defense spending. Each year, if Congress enacts a spending level that exceeds BCA caps for the defense base budget, the President is required to sequester or levy across-the-board cuts to each type of defense spending to meet the BCA caps.¹ These constraints have renewed debate on the right size and force mix of the "Total Army" including both active component (AC) and reserve components (RC). Table I below illustrates the pattern of postwar cuts to active duty Army strength after World War II, Vietnam, and Operation Desert Storm.

Conflict	Pre-Conflict Strength	Conflict Peak	Post-Conflict Strength
World War II	145,000	8.5 million	554,000
Vietnam	554,000	1.5 million	880,000
Cold War-Desert Storm	770,000	770,000	475,000
OIF/OEF	480,000	570,000	490,000

Table I. Post conflict active Army end strength²

Table II summarizes planned cuts to Total Army through fiscal 2019.

The following provides a snap shot of recent/planned Army downsizing:

Component	Fiscal Year & Army End Strength by Component					PB 16 Cuts Relative to Different Base Years	
	2000 Pre-Wars	2011 War-time End Strength High	2015	2017 President's FY 16 Budget	2019 If Return to Sequestration	2000 Base Year	2011 Base Year
Regular Army	480K	570K	490K	450K	420K	-30K -6.25 %	-120K -21.1 %
Army National Guard	350K	358.2K	350K	335K	315K	-15K -4.29 %	-23.2K -6.48 %
US Army Reserve	205K	206K	205K	195K	185K	-10K -4.88 %	-1K -5.34 %
Totals	1035K	1134.2K	1045K	980K	920K	-55K -5.31 %	-144.2K -12.7 %

SOURCE: National Defense Authorization Acts, G3/FM, and PB 16

Table II. Sequestration cuts 1³

Without an urgent military threat, budgets will continue to decline and forces will be cut further. If the US is to maintain superpower status, these cuts must balance the fiscal realities of the budgetary spreadsheet with our strategic defense needs. Strategy is the process of balancing means through ways to achieve the desired political end. In force planning, the means are taken to be future military forces and the ends are the expected purposes for which those military capabilities are to be acquired.⁴ While comparing the process of cutting forces to managing natural timber resources, I argue that for the Army to best support US strategy (ends), we must consider capacity and power (means) relative to other nations. I will provide background on the Total Army's evolution before comparing three approaches as ways to achieve our ends. I advocate an approach (ways) to improve rapid deployability by shifting enabler forces to the AC while retaining ground combat capacity by moving more Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) to the RC. This approach will retain our current lethal capacity; improve the speed of deployments, and save taxpayer dollars.

Primary Considerations: United States Strategy and Power. President Obama issued a new version of the National Security Strategy (NSS) in February 2015. The NSS is the President's overarching strategic document in which he details goals, planning objectives, describes the operational environment, and gives perspective on anticipated threats. He points to treaties and alliances and a multilateral approach to foreign policy in which the United States takes a leading role while working to include our partner nations in any contingency operation. Obama writes that we possess a military whose might, technology, and geostrategic reach is unrivaled in human history. He touted our renewed global alliances from Europe to Asia. Where core interests are threatened we can act unilaterally, but are stronger when we mobilize collectively for action.⁵ President Obama's NSS largely continued the liberal international relations concepts of America leading to advance our security.

The National Military Strategy (NMS) considers strategic threats. The NMS lists four nations as posing challenges: Russia, Iran, China, and North Korea.⁶ The Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) is focused on Department of Defense capabilities. The 2014 version of the QDR summarized the impacts of budget imposed force cuts. Reductions in military spending will result in the smallest Army since prior to World War II. Former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, identified this risk in the chairman's summary to the QDR in 2014.⁷ Deputy Secretary of Defense Bob Work outlined the guidance as follows:

United States joint force in peacetime does three things: One, it defends the homeland. Two, we conduct a global counterterrorism campaign in conjunction with our partners. And three, we assure our allies and deter potential adversaries in multiple regions around the world. If deterrence fails, then have a force big enough to defeat or deny an adversary in one region in a very large multi-phased joint campaign, and have the capability to simultaneously deny an opportunistic aggressor in a second theater from reaching their objectives or imposing extreme costs on them at the same time.⁸

The global balance of National Power is also a primary consideration in world affairs and must be considered for strategic force planning. The United States is clearly the most powerful country in the world, by most measures. Rand Corporation's Global Power Index (GPI) is an analytical tool for estimating national power. The model seeks to answer questions such as the following:

- What is the current distribution of power?
- How will the distribution of global power change in the next two decades and what are the implications for US interests, regional dynamics, and global governance?⁹

The power dimensions that form the basis for estimates are depicted in Figure 1.

Additionally, the index measures various indicators within the five major dimensions to give approximate values for National Power, depicted in Figure 2 on the next page.

Dimension	Indicator	Description
Military	Nuclear Weapons	Logarithmic function of warheads
	Military Power	Military expenditures
Economic	GDP	Gross domestic product (purchasing power parity)
	Trade	Total trade (exports plus imports)
	Energy	Net energy exports (all sources)
	Investment	Foreign direct investment
	Foreign Aid	Overseas development assistance
Technology	Innovation	Research and development expenditure
	Connectivity	ICT capital stocks
Political	Governance	Government revenues
	Diplomacy	... adjusted by Diplomatic Power Index
Demographic	Population	Working age population above poverty line
	Health/Education	... adjusted by Human Development Index

Figure 1 Global Power Index dimensions¹⁰

Figure 2 below depicts the global power index composite rankings.

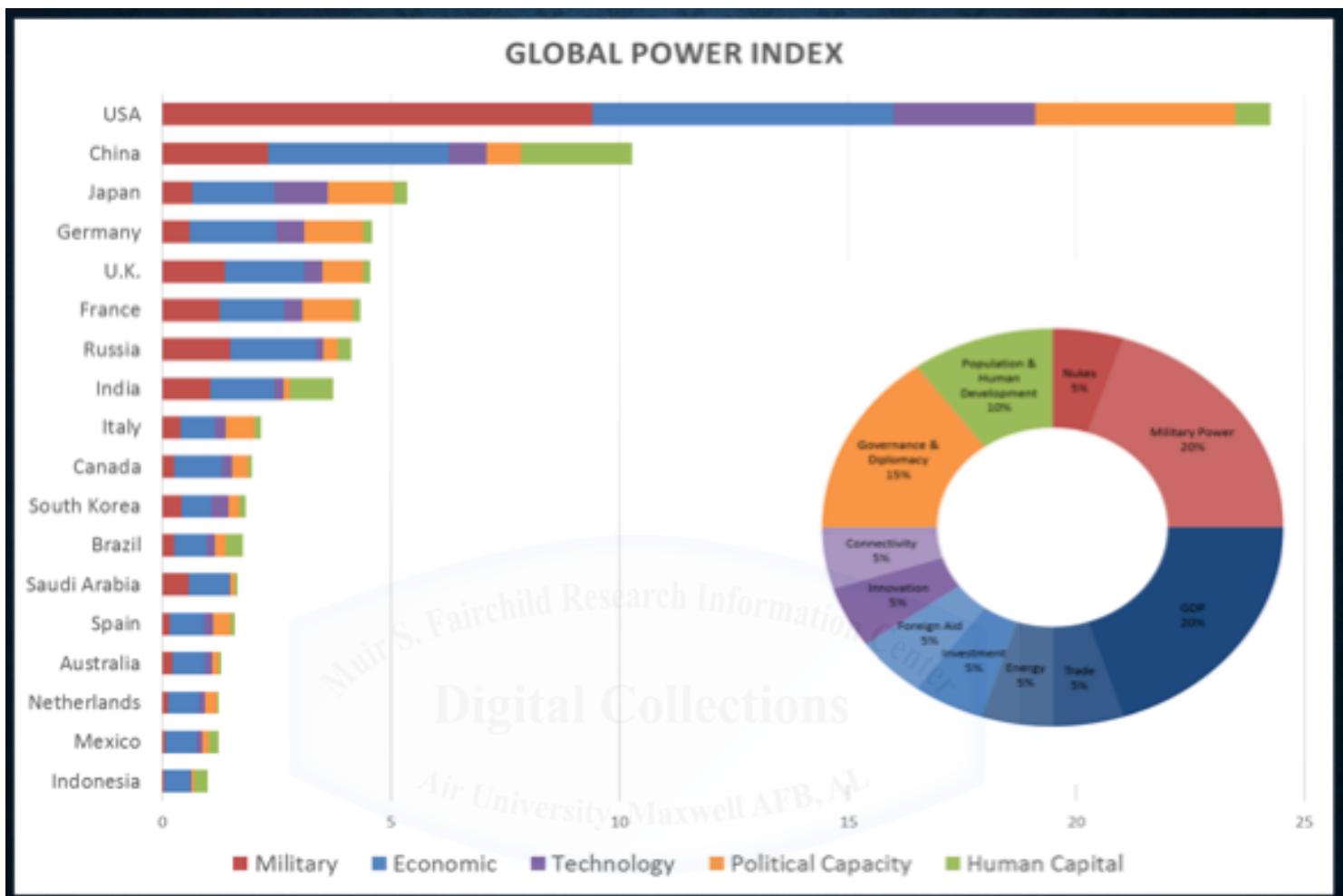


Figure 2 Global Power Index composite rankings¹¹

The global power rankings clearly depict the United States as the most powerful nation in the world when considering all sources of national power. Since national defense capacity is primarily measured in the military dimension, Figure 3 isolates this dimension in comparison to other nations. This is the dimension used by force structure planners for strategic estimates.

Figure 3. Military dimension of National Power.

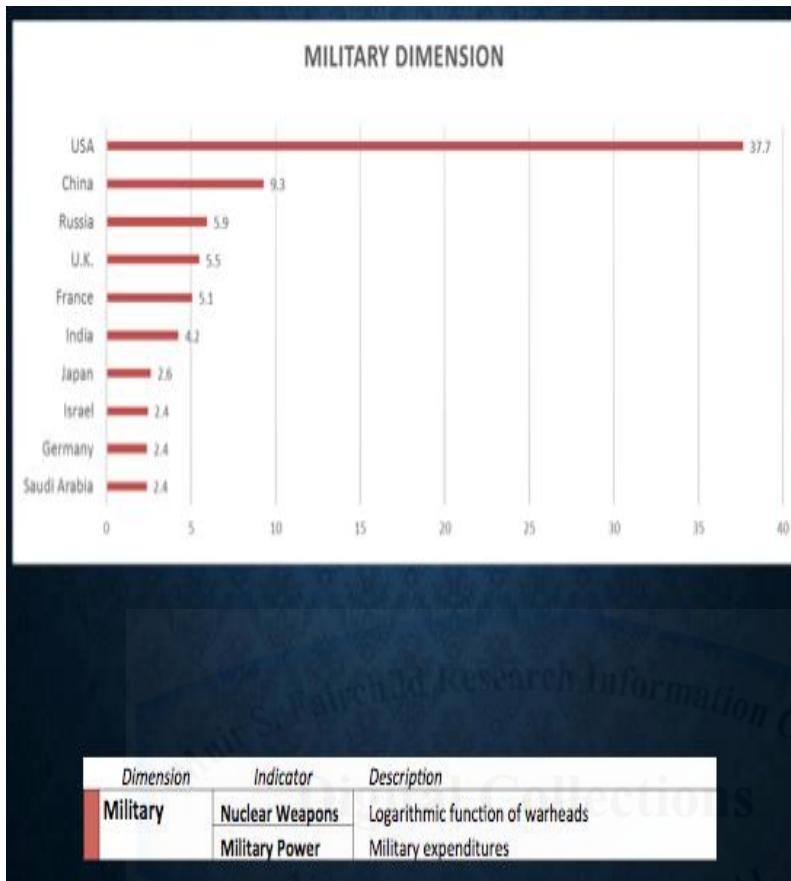


Figure 3 Military dimension of Power¹²

US strategy evolves in a dynamic global security environment. In determining the required means, the national power and military strength of both the partner nations and adversary nations must be considered. A key indicator of military strength is defense spending. In 2006, the United States joined NATO Allies in agreeing that 2% of each nation's GDP should be spent on defense. Additionally, 20% of defense spending would be for defense equipment.¹³ A June 2015 story in The Wall Street Journal indicated that of the 28 members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, only 5 had reached the military spending target of 2% of GDP.¹⁴ Figure 4 depicts NATO spending as a percentage of GDP.

Figure 4. NATO countries spending vs GDP.

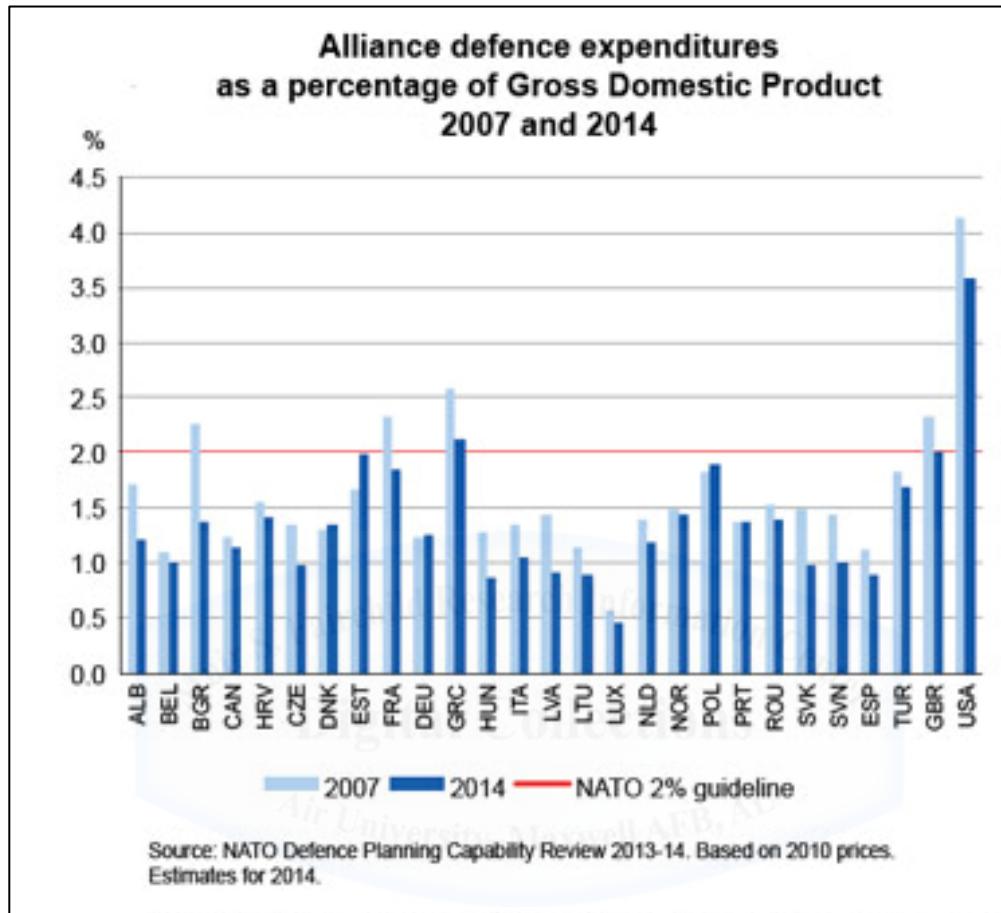


Figure 4 NATO military spending vs GDP¹⁵

The data in Figure 4 represents defense spending for 2007 and 2014. While NATO spends relatively little on defense, potential rivals increased spending but none are near the U.S. levels. According to data from the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute in 2014 the United States spent more on defense than the next seven countries combined. The Peter G. Peterson Foundation graphically arranged this data in Figure 5.

Figure 5. U.S. defense spending compared to next seven biggest spenders.

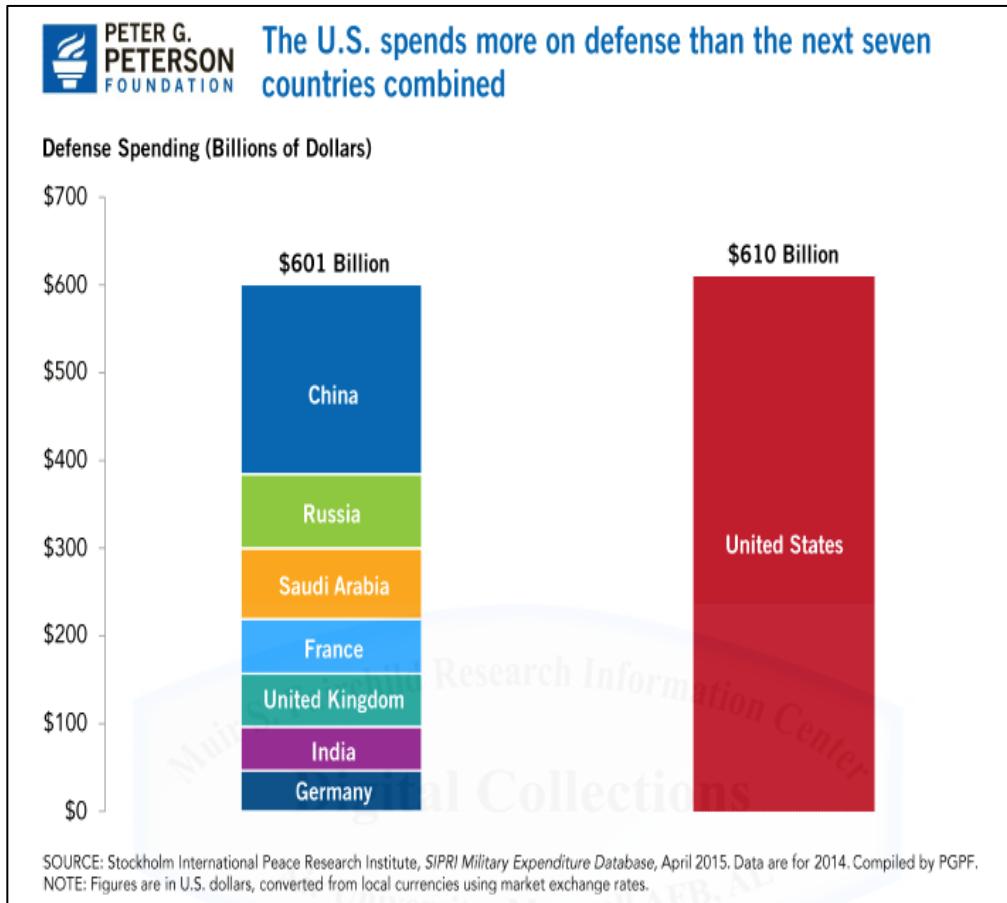


Figure 5 US defense spending vs. next 7 globally¹⁶

While the military expenditures of both China and Russia have increased over previous years, their combined expenditures for 2014 are still less than half of the United States budget. This gap, combined with weak NATO spending is likely to cause sequestration level cuts to the Department of Defense to continue as Congress seeks to relieve fiscal constraints. Since the Army has heavily relied on the Total Army concept in recent years, and RC forces are believed to offer a cost savings, the AC/RC mix deserves analysis. The Total Army has evolved to rely more on RC forces as an operational reserve. A background on how this came about and the potential efficiencies this concept provide is included below.

The Abrams Doctrine: How did we get here?

In 1965, President Johnson utilized the draft rather than deploying RC forces as part of the manning strategy for the Vietnam War.¹⁷ General Creighton Abrams was Army Chief of Staff as the Vietnam War ended. Based on complications of depending on draftees and low public support for the war effort, he implemented a concept that would be known as the Abrams doctrine. The Abrams doctrine established an operating concept in which the United States Army could not endure sustained combat without also mobilizing RC forces.¹⁸ Theoretically, mobilizing volunteer forces from the RC would cause broader public support since their ranks were filled with community members from across the nation.

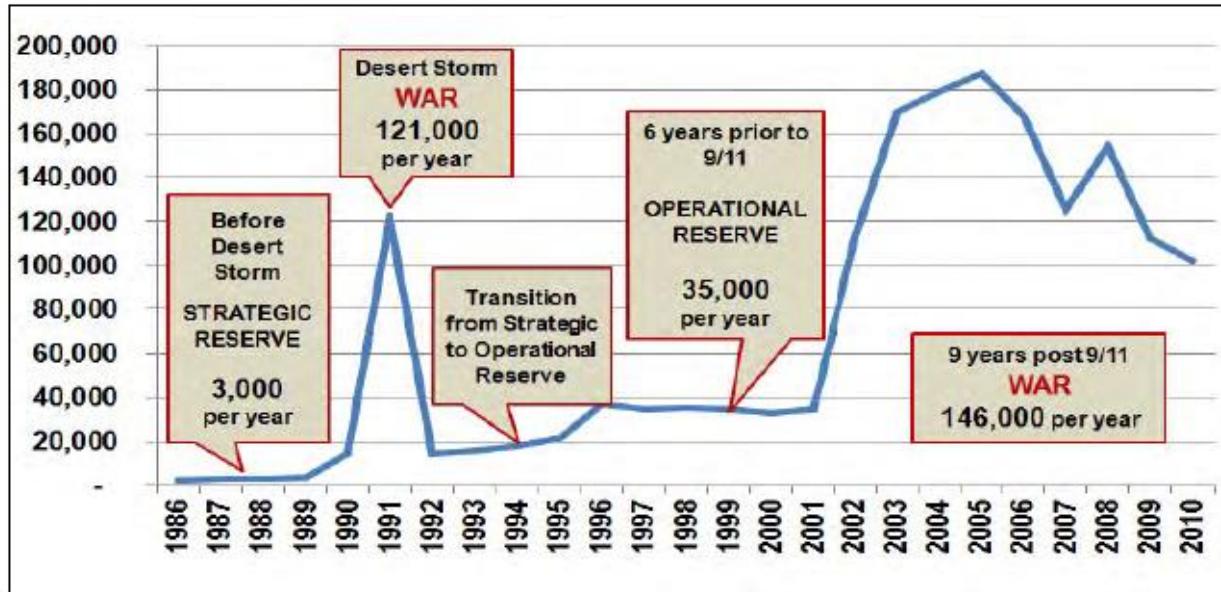
General Abrams and Defense Secretary Gerald Laird sought to use RC forces as a means to manage the new All Volunteer Force's increased costs. RC Soldiers and units would train to maintain a baseline level of readiness, costing a fraction of AC forces to maintain unless mobilized. These forces could mobilize and expand the capacity of the AC in the event of a major war. Laird intended to achieve cost savings by relying on RC support. The total force concept was to be applied to all aspects of resourcing the RC. The resulting cost savings would allow more forces to be available in the event of a large-scale contingency operation that exceeded the capability of AC forces.¹⁹ Simultaneously ending the draft and cutting forces set conditions to test the Abrams doctrine in future wars.

Implementing and assessing the Abrams doctrine: The Army used the interwar period between Vietnam and the First Gulf War to rebuild its foundation. Implementation of the All Volunteer Force, modernized weapon systems, and revolutions in training and doctrine made the Army more lethal and operationally effective.²⁰ The mobilization for Operation Desert Storm tested the Abrams doctrine, with mixed results. Army leaders hailed the success of two National

Guard field Artillery brigades, the 142nd from Arkansas and the 196th from Tennessee. Additionally, sixty seven percent of RC units deployed within 45 days of mobilizing and 28 percent deployed within 20 days. However, a disputed example a shortfall is the 48th Brigade Combat Team, which the Army called to active duty but refused to certify as ready for deployment overseas. Defense Secretary Chaney claimed the 48th wasn't ready and that deploying them risked lives. Guard senior officers and congressional supporters countered that the Army wouldn't deploy the unit because to do so would validate the cost savings of keeping combat forces in the RC.²¹ These concerns led congress to authorize reforms designed to improve RC readiness.

Response to the 9/11 terror attacks illustrated the Readiness of the Guard and Reserves in the new century. The Army reduction in strength to 482,000 Soldiers after Desert Storm was the lowest since prior to World War II.²² This force lacked capacity to simultaneously conduct combat operations in Afghanistan and Iraq without the Reserve Components. Over 890,000 reservists mobilized in support of Operations Enduring Freedom, Iraqi Freedom, and New Dawn.

²³ These trends are best illustrated in figure 6 below.



The data in Figure 6 clearly depicts the increased reliance on RC forces.²⁴ After 9/11, Guard and Reserve forces exceeded the first Gulf War usage rate for nearly a decade. By 2005, the Army had 15 Brigade Combat Teams (BCTs) engaged in combat in Iraq, 8 of these; over half were from the Army National Guard.²⁵ These forces operated as land owning forces, responsible for operations in a critical battle space. Army leaders praised their performance throughout this period. During his Senate confirmation hearing in July 2015, Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley affirmed the contributions of these units during his testimony before congress. Milley repeated his remarks at the National Guard Association of the United States convention in September 2015 saying “I’ve only been on the job for a few weeks, but it’s obvious to me that I need to deploy more of the Guard, not less.”²⁶

The RCs strong combat performance validated the military capability arguments behind the Abrams doctrine. Their fiscal value has been equally impressive. A Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB) review in 2013 found that reservists cost between 22% and 32% per capita cost relative to Active component Soldiers. Reserve forces supply 39% of the Department of Defense

force structure while consuming only 16% of the budget.²⁷ RC forces cost less even when mobilized because their retirement costs are more manageable, consuming less than 17% of the retiree payouts in FY13. Additionally, many of the costs associated with caring for the active forces such as housing, permanent change of station funding, and use of some dependent services do not apply to RC members. The total cost of maintaining Reserve Component Soldiers is approximately one third of their AC counterparts.²⁸ While there is some disagreement among security strategists about the RFPB conclusions, particularly about the exact cost for RC forces in comparison to their AC counterparts, even the most stubborn RC critics acknowledge that the RC Soldiers are not paid when they are off duty working in their civilian occupations.

The Army committed to the Guard and Reserve during the critical decade of persistent conflict and relied on their combat effectiveness, cost savings, and the community support. When sequestration cuts became reality however, the relationship decayed as each component sought to avoid cuts. The Air Force experienced a similar dynamic during FY13. Congress responded by appointing an independent commission to conduct a comprehensive review of the Total Air Force and report to Congress with recommendations on AF size, budget, and Reserve Component Integration. The Commission recommended reducing the AC force structure, growing RC force structure, and increasing the RC utilization. Reserve forces could be used to maintain a surge capacity more economically than large and expensive AC forces.²⁹

Similar to the Air Force process, the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2015 in public law 113-291 established the National Commission on the Future of the Army. The Commission is to report a comprehensive study and recommendations by February 1, 2016 to the President and Congress of the United States. The Commission will examine the structure of the Army, policy assumptions related to its size and force mix, and make an assessment of the

size and force structure of the Army's active and reserve components. The Commission will make recommendations on modifications to the Army's structure based on current and anticipated mission requirements and acceptable levels of national risk, in a manner consistent with available resources, and anticipated future resources.³⁰ The Commission's task is critically important. The future structure of the Army across all three components will determine the United States strategic defense capabilities and must be based on strategic factors related to anticipated threats and missions, not just bureaucratic compromises that we can afford.

Comparing and analyzing three different strategic approaches.

The strategic factors of geography, history, culture, economics, and governmental systems will continue to affect the strategic processes.³¹ We must also consider strategic dimensions of logistics, operations, social factors, and technology relative to other powers.³² The interplay of these dimensions and factors form the environment in which our defense strategy must operate. The United States is a large land mass protected by two oceans and friendly bordering countries. The democratic population strongly prefers diplomacy to war. The strategic environment has guided force structure investments in the past and should continue to do so in the future.

I will introduce and analyze three approaches to reducing Army structure using strategic factors, strategic dimensions, and power considerations. For each approach I will identify any unmitigated strategic risks. The first approach, which I compare to a bulldozer, calls for large cuts in military spending. The second approach is a proposed reduction in ground forces suggested in a 2013 study that I compare to cutting with a chainsaw. A third approach seeks to enhance ground force rapid deployment capacity by adjusting force mix between components; I compare this method to cutting with pruning shears.

The first approach: cutting with a bulldozer? Barry Posen's case against interventional foreign policy proposed 50% cuts to ground forces and 25-33% cuts to navy and air forces. Posen argues the United States continued pursuit of a hegemonic strategy is counterproductive. He asserts that massive United States defense spending has caused rival nations, namely China to expand their armed forces. Allies have neglected defense spending, relying instead on United States protection. He posits relying on unique geography, nuclear deterrence, and increased Allied defense spending. The U.S. should maintain over flight and basing agreements, but not forward basing, for contingencies in overseas locations.³³ I call this a bulldozer approach because it resembles how lumberjacks fell trees from the root to maximize the lumber harvest.

The Bulldozer's strategic factors and dimensions. This approach is based on the United States unique combination of strategic factors, geography and history. The strategic factor of politics is considered, with a clear emphasis on diplomatic and economic elements of national power. This plan assumes that the United States can rely on our track record as a peaceful democratic nation to transition to a "soft power" influence on international affairs. The logistical and operational dimensions of strategy figure prominently as this retrenchment strategy would consolidate the remaining military power with basing in the United States.

Caution: Bulldozers can crush you! Posen assumes a more favorable world order would emerge from United States disengagement. Allied nations will increase military capability and assume more of the security burden. China will decrease defense build up, as the United States' spending and aggressive posture would no longer threaten it. Russia will not threaten border nations sovereignty. Should these rosy assumptions prove incorrect, however the logistical and operational challenges of projecting power to assist our Allies could be insurmountable. For example, what if an over flight or basing agreement fell through as hostilities began, as happened

prior to Operation Iraqi Freedom? The United States robust military power enabled us to adjust strategy to project decisive force in spite of this unforeseen event. A sizable reduction in military power could compromise our ability to adjust in the future. Additionally, what would happen if the United States lost technological overmatch? Extreme reductions in conventional force capabilities could jeopardize the United States ability to deter aggression short of nuclear escalation.

The second approach: Fire up the chainsaw. The February 2013 study titled “National Defense in a Time of Change” recommends sweeping changes to defense spending. The authors, retired Admiral Gary Roughhead and Kori Schake, claim an imbalance between military expenditures and the global security environment. They cite a roughly “equal share” budgetary basis, rather than a threat based model, among the services as evidence. Their planning basis is the 2012 Defense Strategic Guidance, which cautions that future United States advantages in access, rapid reinforcement, uncontested airspace, reach back capabilities, and reliable communications will be increasingly threatened. They cite the Defense Strategic Guidance planning assumption that manpower intensive sustained ground combat and counterinsurgency are unlikely. The authors propose changing the Joint Force mix, in order to focus on modernized capabilities in the sea, space, and cyber domains. They outline a plan that would drastically reduce the Army’s force mix, holding other components at current levels. They propose cutting the Army AC by 200,000 Soldiers, with a simultaneous increase of 100,000 to Army RC.³⁴ Under this proposal the U.S. Marines would assume the role of forced entry invading force. Active component Army forces would be used in a follow on role. Army Reserve components would be used as an operational force in mature theaters. The authors point to a need to increase burden sharing among allies. Allied forces would thus be counted on as a force provider in

future contingencies. The authors estimate that the proposed changes would save \$20 billion annually when combined with reductions in infrastructure.³⁵ I call this approach the chainsaw cut because of it cuts a large main branch, the Army, away from the joint force tree.

The Chainsaw approach considers strategic factors and dimensions. The authors use the United States unique geography to justify their recommended force levels. Cuts to ground forces are based on the United States' relative size and position, bordered by oceans and friendly neighbors and protected from invasion from foreign attackers. Naval and air forces remain at current levels to protect the sea, air, and space domains. The technological dimension of strategy is considered, as rivals will close the gap in this area if we neglect investments in new ships and weapons systems. A technologically superior Navy and Air Force, would achieve strategic objectives without a large standing Army. Joint force roles would evolve, with initial ground combat using the Marine Corps as an initial entry force. The reduced Army would be an occupying force after the Marines established security. The authors recognize the outstanding performance of Army RC forces during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom, and weight the Army force mix heavily in the RC to offset the loss in capacity. The resulting force mix would be 70% RC and 30% AC. This approach stretches former Defense Secretary Gates' logic to the extreme. When arguing to modernize the military, he acknowledged that the United States would be hard pressed to fight a conventional ground war elsewhere on short notice, calling this prospect unlikely. He cited the quick striking power of air and naval forces as mitigating factors to the risk posed by our limited ground forces.³⁶

Warning: Chainsaws can be dangerous! The chainsaw cut approach is built on a series of questionable assumptions. Should any one, or a combination of these be incorrect, consequences would likely be severe to Marines and Soldiers engaged in ground combat.

Assumptions such as, allies will expand their military to assume a greater burden in defense; rivals will not exploit changing military power dynamics in which they would have relative superiority; technological overmatch will offset superior military ground force numbers in China and Russia are potentially hazardous. Predicting how the international community might react to such a bold shift in United States strategy is risky. Would the political and economic dynamics of our NATO allies be such that they would invest enough in security to deter Russian aggression in Eastern Europe? Would South Korea have sufficient ground forces to repel an attack from the North?

This approach ignores history's lessons. Post Vietnam Army leaders vowed to never participate in counterinsurgency operations, and removed lessons on the topic from the War College curriculum.³⁷ Army leaders were unprepared to deal with the insurgency in Iraq as a result. The authors acknowledge assuming risk in the land domain, but underestimate the degree. This approach suffers from the "RSVP fallacy" a mistake in assuming that we can simply "opt out" of missions that they don't find preferable.³⁸ The Army's major combat force is the Brigade Combat Team (BCT). Historically the Army has deployed an average of 21 BCTs to major regional conflict.³⁹ A 40% end strength reduction would cripple Army capabilities. When the Army reduced from 570,000 to the current 490,000, 13 BCTs were inactivated. A reduction to 290,000 would likely result in an Active army force structure capable of fielding less than 10 BCTs since institutional requirements for training, infrastructure maintenance, and other unit types would remain in the inventory.⁴⁰ According to General Frank Grass, the Guard BCTs would need between 80-120 days to deploy depending on the mission.⁴¹ Army Chief of Staff General Mark Milley testified before Congress that for the Army to create new BCTs and send them to combat, it would take three years.⁴² The chainsaw approach would leave the Joint

Force dependent on a dangerously small Army ground force until Guard and Reserve force could mobilize, train, and deploy. The current security environment features threats that will not wait on the United States to mobilize for battle. For example a resurgent Russia has already forcibly annexed sovereign states using hybrid warfare. Should Russia escalate tensions and invade a NATO member, the United States, and thereby NATO itself, would lack sufficient capacity to deploy ground forces to repel invasion or secure the country. This possibility while currently unlikely would increase with a drastic reduction in United States ground combat capacity.

A final approach: for a healthy tree, use pruning shears. A final redesign approach is designed to retain both current rapid deployment capability and the current BCT capacity in the Total Army. This method is analogous to using pruning shears to strategically trim unhealthy limbs for the future growth and betterment of the tree. This can be achieved through altering the force mix and relying more on RC forces, which will result in budget savings. This approach capitalizes on the cheaper operating cost of RC forces. The Army would retain force structure by migrating authorizations to the RC. Currently the Army's force mix is 48% Active and 52% Reserves.⁴³ The Army's current budget reduction plan amounts to "strategy by spreadsheet" by simply cutting parts of each component without any real regard to capabilities. The resultant Total Army mix would be approximately 54% Reserve. Similar savings could be achieved by altering the force mix to approximately 60% Reserve while maintaining a larger overall end strength number.

This force mix could be achieved by focusing on capabilities to be moved between the components. The cost savings result from the 1:3 ratio of costs between AC to RC units. For every one BCT reduced from the AC, 3 could be fielded in the RC. The current mix has a total of 60 BCTs with 32 in the Active component and 28 in the Guard. The Reserve does not have

BCTs, as its forces are all combat support or combat service support units. Meanwhile AC forces currently have a shortfall of enabling combat support and combat service support.⁴⁴ This shortfall means that the active Army currently has to rely on the practice of mobilizing reservists in key support functions in order to rapidly deploy for contingency operations. To remedy this imbalance, and retain the capacity to field the current level of BCTs, a series of simultaneous actions should occur. First, the mission and scope of Active Army forces should be defined such that they are the rapid deployment team responsible for initial combat operations. Second, the support units that would enable rapid deployment for the Army should move out of the Reserve and into the Active force to enable rapid deployment. Third, the sequestration level cuts must be administered in a way to retain the current level of BCTs by moving BCTs from the AC force to the RC forces. Currently programmed cuts to Active forces amount to 70,000 with another 55,000 from the Guard and Reserves. Instead, this proposed plan will hold the RC at current levels while cutting an additional 18,000 from the active Army. RC forces would assume an operational reserve, capable of deploying BCTs to theater within the 80-110 days that General Grass specifies.

Strategic factors and dimensions. The pruning shears approach is a measured method that accounts for the historical, geographic, economic, and political factors of strategy. The historical factor is covered through the last decade of success in combat by Reserve forces. Geographically this plan spreads combat power and force structure throughout the United States. Politically the plan is very sustainable, since Guard and Reserve forces are in every congressional district in the nation and the relatively minor cuts in Active forces would be compensated with increased capabilities in rapid deployment. The strategic dimensions are

satisfied with this approach since the logistical, operational, and social factors have been tested by over a decade of sustained operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Every plan has risks, even pruning shears can be dangerous. The risks in this plan are manageable. RC force readiness must be carefully monitored. Since reserve forces have authorized training for only 39 days per year, some tasks must be completed after mobilization. This risk could be offset with additional training, but the associated costs would erode the 1:3 ratio of savings. Reserve and Active forces must be fully integrated through training and fully interoperable through equipping. This plan represents a best option because the Total Army has mitigated these risks since 9/11 out of necessity. Reserve component forces have proven that when given the training and equipment they can successfully complete missions alongside their active component partners.

Conclusions

The United States will continue to reduce military spending. This historical norm presents both challenges and opportunities for military strategists. The current power dynamic, in which the U. S. is the top military power, is not guaranteed to last. Rivals will attempt to reduce gaps in military power and technology. U.S. strategy should continue to seek superiority in all domains of warfare. The land component has historically proven to be decisive, and will always be important. Clausewitz said that war is an act of force to compel an enemy to do our will. LTG McMaster argues that, since our enemies live and operate primarily on the ground, compelling the enemy requires ground forces. LTG McMaster's argument is debatable, but the harsh reality of ground combat is well documented in history. Balancing the costs of providing a Department of Defense that can win against our enemies in all domains should be the goal.

The Army has proven during a decade of combat that the Reserve Components are a capable force, when adequately trained and resourced. The Budget Control Act presents both challenges and opportunities. The challenge is to maintain power with fewer resources. The opportunity is to consider new ways to achieve these results. The Army must avoid bureaucratic compromises and indiscriminate cuts. The pruning shears approach considers the health of the tree by maintaining current ground combat capacity through BCTs, improving rapid deployment, and cutting the required budget to a manageable level.



Notes

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⁵ President Barack Obama, “National Security Strategy 2015,” February 2015, introduction,

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⁸ Bob Work, “Third Offset Strategy and Its Implications for Partners and Allies” (Willard Hotel, Washington, D.C., January 28, 2015), <http://www.defense.gov/News/Speeches/Speech-View/Article/606641/the-third-us-offset-strategy-and-its-implications-for-partners-and-allies>.

⁹ Timothy Smith, “Global Power Index: Measuring National Power” (Maxwell Air Force Base, Montgomery, AL., August 18, 2015).

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¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Jens Stoltenberg, “NATO: The Secretary General’s Annual Report 2014,” NATO Annual Report, (January 30, 2015), http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/opinions_116854.htm.

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